

# **COPING WITH BIAS CRIMES/INCIDENTS**

## **EMOTIONAL HEALTH ISSUES FOR VICTIMS**

Bias crimes/incidents affect people in many ways. In some situations it may mean loss of loved ones, including relatives, friends, neighbors, or family pets. In others, it means loss of home and property, furnishings and important or cherished belongings. Sometimes it means starting over with a new home or business. The emotional effects of loss and disruption may show up immediately or may appear many months later.

It is very important to understand that there is a natural grieving process following this loss, and that this event will cause unusual and unwanted stress in those attempting to reconstruct their lives.

### **SOME INITIAL RESPONSES TO BIAS CRIMES/INCIDENTS**

- Fear
- Disbelief
- Reluctance to abandon property
- Disorientation and numbing
- Difficulty in making decisions
- Need for information
- Seeking help for yourself and your family
- Helpfulness to other disaster victims

### **SOME LATER RESPONSES**

- Change in appetite and digestive problems
- Difficulty in sleeping and headaches
- Disappointment with, and rejection of, outside help
- Crying for "no apparent reason"
- Guilt over not being able to prevent the incident
- Frustration and feeling of powerlessness over one's own future
- Feelings of being overwhelmed
- Moodiness and irritability
- Anxiety about the future
- Anger and suspicion
- Apathy and depression
- Isolating oneself from family, friends, or social activities
- Domestic violence
- Increased effects of allergies, colds and flu

### **SPECIAL EFFECTS ON YOUNG CHILDREN**

- Return to earlier behavior, such as thumb sucking or bed wetting
- Fantasies that the incident never happened
- Reluctance to go to bed
- Withdrawal and immobility
- Clinging to parent
- Crying and screaming
- Nightmares
- Refusal to attend school
- Problems at school and inability to concentrate.